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“THERE ARE FOLKS COMIN’ AFTER US
THAT WILL NEED TREES”:
PROGRESSIVE ERA CONSERVATION,
THE WOODS TRADITION, AND MAINE
WRITER HOLMAN FRANCIS DAY

BY DALE E. POTTS

Throughout his novels, Maine author Holman Francis Day maintained the importance of both the conservation of timber and the cultural conservation of Maine’s rural communities. Day wrote his novels in a Progressive Era climate permeated by a wise-use ideology. The point for Day, however, was not whether resources should be used, but by whom; his approach emphasized Maine’s resources for Maine’s people and industry. As a writer of fiction, Day balanced the needs of the people of Maine with a concern for the natural resources that made the state unique. Dale Potts is an Assistant Professor of History at South Dakota State University where he teaches courses in Native American history, environmental history and United States cultural history. His research includes the study of popular nature writing, including pulp fiction, and how it relates to the topics of conservation and environmentalism in the twentieth century.

IN THE novel, *King Spruce* (1908), Maine writer Holman Francis Day (1865–1935) introduced the character of a young woods worker, Dwight Wade, to the North Woods, a region where generations of lumbermen spent their entire working lives. On a hiking trek to a cutover section, Wade accompanied a Maine guide named Christopher Straight who impressed him with his affinity for the woods. “There are few men in the world with such appealing qualities,” Day wrote of this guide and part-time lumberman, “as those who have passed their lives in the woods and know what the woods mean.” Straight criticized a rival lumber outfit for unscrupulous practices that destroyed the forest and the lives of those who made their living in Maine’s wooded lands. Incorporating a “wise-use” philosophy, Day’s character asserted that “there are folks comin’ after us that will need trees.”¹



Portrait of Holman Francis Day printed in Holman F. Day, *Kin O' Ktaadn: Verse Stories of the Plain Folk Who Are Keeping Bright the Old Home Fires Up in Maine* (Boston: Small, Maynard, and Company, 1904). Image courtesy of the Maine State Library, Augusta, ME.

Throughout his novels, Holman Day maintained the importance of both the conservation of timber and the cultural conservation of Maine's rural communities, and in doing so, his fiction paralleled some of the most important political and social issues of the era. In his earliest novels, Day championed the cause of Progressive Era resource use, but in later works, such as *Red Lane: A Romance of the Border* (1912) and *Rider of the King Log* (1919), he increasingly honed in on the difficulties facing Franco-American farmers in Aroostook County, Native Americans of central Maine, and other woods workers and settlers of the region, making clear their positive relationships to the land. Day wrote his novels in a Progressive Era climate permeated by a wise-use ideology and faith in scientific authority. In his fiction, he focused on the "utilitarian value of the forests" in a manner similar to that of Gifford Pinchot, head of the United States Forest Service. Like many who supported conservation initiatives, Day validated scientific approaches when it came to forest use. College-educated protagonists espousing the latest in scientific forestry figure prominently in his fiction. The point for Day was not whether resources should be used, but by whom; his approach emphasized Maine's resources for Maine's people and industry. In this regard, Day's writings mirrored the positions of business owners within the state who feared the effects of outside economic control. As Richard W. Judd writes, conservation held considerable appeal for local, traditional resource users who "invoked conservation ideals to defend their world and the resources on which it was based."²

Potential monopoly control of Maine's forests prompted Day to criticize the overwhelming power of outside interests over the resources of the state. This concern placed Day in line with Theodore Roosevelt's Commission on Country Life that expressed concern for "deficiencies in the rural condition such as land speculation, monopoly control of water, waste of forests, and restraint of trade." As a writer of fiction, Day balanced the needs of the people of Maine with a concern for the natural resources that made the state unique. His books linked a wise-use ideology with melodramatic plot lines reminiscent of nineteenth-century dime novels. The North Woods environment and its people heavily influenced the resulting stories.³

From Dime Novels to North Woods Melodramas

Holman Day adopted dime novel tropes, including melodramatic plots, even as he garnered publication with upscale New York publishing houses. The dime novel as a genre was over fifty years old by the early twentieth

century, but remained influential for the subject of Holman Day's North Woods literature. In the post-Civil War era, the firm of Beadle and Adams created *Beadle's Boys Library of Sport* in which urban youths found themselves in the Maine woods where they engaged in lighthearted, if largely unrealistic, adventures. Evidence of a vogue for such literature exists with somewhat more prestigious publishing efforts. Maine's Charles Asbury Stephens, in his work *The Knockabout Club in the Woods* (1881), similarly took advantage of Maine's perceived wilderness qualities to test the survival capabilities of a cross-section of America's youth.⁴

Whether in dime novels or more upscale publishing efforts, authors continued to utilize Maine as a backdrop for adventure but avoided discussion of lumber operations. By the turn of the century, other Maine writers, including William G. Patten (better known by the pseudonym of Burt L. Standish), created his most famous character, Frank Merriwell. Observing a lull in public interest in westerns, Patten helped in the transition from the dime novel to pulp-magazine formats with the *Tip-Top Weekly* adventures of this athletic Yale undergraduate. Merriwell's adventures took him around the world in a series of books that avoided Maine lumber as a topic. By comparison, Holman Day's literature themes entailed larger social and economic issues in a way that these heroic adventure stories did not; Day's characters strove to maintain conservation ideals alongside a local emphasis on resource use.⁵

Day's works incorporated a degree of social reform reflective of late-nineteenth-century political and cultural life. In fact, he addressed themes that bore more than a passing resemblance to urban melodramas of the period. Discussing urban-centered dime novels of this period, historian Michael Denning describes how a strong sense of melodrama "attempted to unite a narrative of an individual's achievement of independence and 'manliness,' a romance of chivalric love, and a tale of worker's solidarity." Holman Day did not focus his writing on the plight of the urban working class, however. His novels elevated the nobility and hard-working nature of local, rural people. In a more populist manner, he subsumed class differences within an argument of local resources for local people, even as he railed against the power of business conglomerates.⁶

If *King Spruce* or *Rider of the King Log* (1919) bear little resemblance to Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* (1906), a muckraking expose on the meatpacking industry which was typical of the genre, it is pertinent to remember that Day embraced a more populist, agrarian position in his fiction. With an ear to Progressive Era rhetoric, Day's attention to societal problems closely resembled the format of "civic melodrama." Day's North Woods lumber outfits battled large-scale outside conglomerates in novels that re-

sembled muckraking literature while openly avoiding discussion of class conflict. Any similarity to well-known muckraking authors was largely relegated to “sensational warnings against corporate modernity.” Throughout his works, he maintained the necessity for local economic growth and the maintenance of rural populations.⁷

Day initially accented a national focus on conservation issues by protesting monopoly control of North Woods lumber. But as the impulse for national Progressive Era conservation waned by the late 1910s, he wrote increasingly of Maine’s resources for Maine’s people, singling out marginalized groups. Day’s forests remained working landscapes, and his independent workers conveyed the importance of woods knowledge and the wisdom necessary to gain sustenance from the forest. His Franco-American and Native American characters, for instance, are rustic representations that embody rural, hard-working values. The fast-changing world of the early twentieth century caused upheaval for these populations in the form of increasing pressures on the forests. This concern for the rural sphere appeared under the banner of agrarianism. In the face of expanding national industrialization, “agrarianism assumed a new role and importance, proclaiming an inherent superiority of a rural environment for preserving morals, democracy, and social stability.” In each case, Day’s expanding focus on the lives of Maine’s Franco-American and Native American communities delineated his adherence to this impulse.⁸

Day’s popular books often touched on environmental issues, including timber, paper, and water usage, and underscored the rapid changes occurring in the northern forests. Day mirrored a “wise-use” ideology popular in the Progressive Era, taking aim against corporate greed and its impacts on local, independent operators. In these plots, representatives of large lumber and pulp and paper companies drove forest communities from Maine’s traditionally open lands. In this landscape, Day stressed the North Woods as important for the cultural and economic wellbeing of local people. Novels such as *King Spruce* and *Rider of the King Log* reiterated the importance of logging operations in the state, especially in comparison to the pulp and paper industry. The latter, according to Day, was intent on stripping the landscape. Day’s anti-pulp-and-paper stance was apparent in both of these works on North Woods lumber.⁹

From Newspaper Copy to North Woods Novels

Holman Francis Day was born in Vassalboro, Maine. He attended Colby College, graduating in 1887, then worked as editor for the *Fairfield Journal*

and the *Lewiston Sun*. Around the turn of the twentieth century, Day shifted from writing newspaper copy to writing poems and stories of rural Maine life. In a turn reminiscent of American writer Sherwood Anderson, Day continued working for a publishing outfit but sat at his desk writing stories instead of newspaper copy. His first volume of poetry, *Pine Tree Ballads* (1903), was soon followed by short stories in the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Harper's*, and *New England Magazine*. The modern reader may find it difficult to deconstruct Day's conservation ideas, but the process is necessary to ascertain why he advocated regulating forestry practices and water use. Over time, he advocated more strongly for local resources for local people in an active forest of multiple uses.¹⁰

The Northern, the public service magazine of the Great Northern Paper Company, noted that Day's "fondness for the Maine woods was a fondness for the original and picturesque characters to be found in lumber camps and back-woods settlements, rather than a regard for tall trees, rugged mountains, or the azure spread of lakes in summer." Day expressed concern for Maine's people in place, rather than the North Woods as a preserved wilderness. Throughout his career, he became well acquainted with a number of guides, lumberjacks, and bosses who became models for his characters. The *Bangor Daily News*, for December 30, 1932, recorded that Day modeled a character in *King Spruce* on Abraham Brown, an individual of "giant stature" who was capable of taking his place "beside a draught animal in harness and easily bore his share of hauling a plow or wagon." Within these stories, the lumber hero took center stage. As folklorist Roger D. Abrahams writes, the American hero story epitomizes "the dream values of city dwellers: rebellion, the free life lived close to nature, personal integrity in spite of the corruptive demands of society, and complete self-realization through existence apart from others." Such heroic characterizations encompassed a long line of North Woods heroes, both mythic and literal, going back to at least the nineteenth century.¹¹

In such works as *King Spruce* and *Red Lane*, youthful characters, often with secret connections to the region, entered the lumber industry questioning the logic of clear cutting in an era when, in Day's opinion, lumber and pulp and paper owners flouted laws and restrictions. Day's attention to the interrelationship between forested lands and corporatism caught the attention of Theodore Roosevelt, who invited him to the White House, presumably to discuss conservation issues. Day used local descriptions of woods use to illustrate national concerns, especially with regard to monopolies, a position largely in tune with Progressive Era conservation rhetoric. However, Day's North Woods remained a working landscape, and he

reiterated the logging tradition of Maine. Day remained adamant about the necessity of logging, but expressed concern over who did the logging, and how it was done.¹²

Public Concern and the “Lumber Trust”

The early 1900s was an era of social ferment, and the focus of national concerns was Progressive reform. Writing of the North Woods, Day illustrated his critique of monopoly in reference to the industries of the region. During his newspaper days, Day covered stories about Maine’s rival lumber concerns but expressed a degree of contempt for the pulp industry, ironic considering Great Northern Paper Company described him as “Our Maine Woods Novelist.” As a writer, he familiarized himself with the political machines at work in Maine’s industries at the turn of the century, turning legislative debates over resources into themes for his fiction. For the *Lewiston Journal*, he reported legislative sessions in Augusta, familiarizing himself with “rotten politics.”¹³

In this period, when the nation’s economy still heavily relied on wood, muckrakers concerned themselves with a North Woods-wide lumber trust conspiracy. S.C. Hutchins, writing in *Smith’s Magazine* in 1907, feared “there is no substance upon which civilized man is so largely dependent for his subsistence and comfort as upon wood.” As forty-five square miles of timber fell each day, Hutchins strongly believed in the possibility of a lumber combination in restraint of trade. In this atmosphere of Progressive reform, Maine writer Fannie Hardy Eckstorm asked in *Penobscot Man* (1904) why companies intent on dominating the North Woods environment virtually owned the state’s water, forests, and legislative process, while the men who fought the wilderness bare handed received little if anything.¹⁴

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, lumber and pulp and paper activities continued in the North Woods, borne out by several state reports of the era. The *First Annual Report of the Forest Commissioner for the State of Maine, 1891* stated that the recent opening of the interior of the state by the Canadian Pacific Railroad “greatly facilitated and stimulated” clear cutting of forests in the region. A decade later, the same governmental report maintained a positive view of Maine’s forest health. In *The Fourth Report of the Forest Commissioner for the State of Maine, 1902*, “expert scalers and explorers” provided aggregate estimates of standing timber in the state. The report found that Maine contained “twenty-one

billion two hundred and thirty-nine million (21,239,000,000) feet of spruce, besides large quantities of pine, cedar, hemlock, poplar and various species of hardwoods.” The report praised the expansion of forest activity within the state. This activity resulted from annual growth of spruce ranging from two to four percent. Taking three percent as an average, the report estimated that annual growth warranted the cutting of 637 million feet of spruce timber with pulp mills currently consuming 275 million feet of spruce per year. In keeping with these optimistic predictions, while the report acknowledged significant insect damage in western Maine, the document’s tone downplayed concerns about the future of the “spruce beetle” infestation. Maine’s timber production did reach an all-time high in 1909; however, dwindling spruce trees of merchantable size (impacted by this cutting regimen), a massive spruce budworm outbreak from 1912 to 1920, and the increasing ease of transporting West Coast lumber via the Panama Canal, diminished the importance of Maine’s timber crop.¹⁵

In this competitive market environment, many of Day’s works like *King Spruce* and *Rider of the King Log* accented early-twentieth-century conflicts between rival lumber companies and between lumber and paper concerns. Conflicts between New Brunswick and Penobscot lumbermen erupted in the early decades of the twentieth century over water flowing northeastward into the province. As river drives depended on having enough water to move logs down river, United States and Canadian logging interests between 1909 and 1916 carried out a Joint International Commission on the issue to investigate obstruction of the St. John River. Not long after the commission finally filed a report, however, the downriver lumber mills ran silent.¹⁶

By the early twentieth century, paper companies fully controlled the North Woods of Maine with cuts of lumber, as opposed to pulpwood, declining steadily after 1909. Day vented his ire against these monopolies, largely blaming corporate interests from Boston. New corporate practices appeared less heroic than traditional lumbering in the northern part of Maine. For the latter, Day celebrated a degree of rough-and-tumble disrespect for the law to show the manly qualities of “real” woods work. Depictions of labor in a romanticized forest skirted open discussion of workers’ rights even as Day’s fiction appeared during a period of labor strife in American society.¹⁷

In an era when industry increasingly dictated the modes of life and work for working classes in the city, new cultural outlets such as film and pulp magazines such as *Argosy* tapped into audience discontent, or, at the very least, curiosity. As cultural historian Tony Goodstone writes, in 1916, two thousand strikes and lockouts occurred while “the old outmoded val-

ues of hard work and self-reliance were no longer enough.” As Maine historian David C. Smith wrote of pulp and paper operations, “severe labor troubles plagued the industry,” and after a series of strikes and lock-outs and the increasing use of strike breakers, companies such as International Paper Company became “open shops.” Coupled with increasing violence between competing lumber outfits, the era underwent a volatile period of change. For instance, reoccurring disputes between Canadian and American lumber outfits resulted in armed conflicts over water flowage including a 1905 dynamiting of Chamberlain Dam by Allagash lumbermen.¹⁸

Popular writers explored this social climate for storylines, sometimes championing the cause of labor in melodramatic and comic productions. New fiction markets, such as pulp and slick magazines, tapped into public interest in labor-related fiction, and, in like manner, Day accented the disparity between the wealthy and working classes in the North Woods. Lumber workers were acceptable fare for middle-class readers largely due to their romantic appeal. *Munsey's* was one of the first to publish muckraking stories with an eye to public interest. When the Progressive Era ended by 1920, and a conservative backlash occurred in American politics and society, such stories became less frequent or disappeared entirely.¹⁹

Monopoly, Melodrama and the Independent Outfit

If the North Woods environment focused Day's attention on rural people, his depictions borrowed heavily from other regional writing. Closely related to western fiction, Day's North Woods melodramas contained a cast of recognizable characters transposed from a plains or desert environment to the forests of Maine. The young, idealistic lumberman, fresh from the city; the old, knowledgeable woodsman; and the independent lumber operator trying to remain solvent in the face of poor economic times all appeared in Day's fiction. In addition, stock villains included lumber corporation executives and their underlings in the field. For decades, such villains appeared regularly in western-themed dime novels and often included the “exponents of unpopular economic, social, political, or legal institutions, whose malpractices and inequities they clearly personify.” Appearing at the end of Theodore Roosevelt's second term, *King Spruce* incorporated such characters while promoting local resource use in the North Woods. The novel remains one of Day's clearest enunciations of Progressive Era conservation thought. *The New York Times* described *King Spruce* as “a young man's romantic fight for love and fortune in the woods of Maine, his wit and pluck against the control of the timber barons.” Cor-



Advertisement by Dial Film Company for 1920 film adaptation of *King Spruce*, 17 April 1920. *Motion Picture News*. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:King_Spruce_\(1920\)_-_Ad_4.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:King_Spruce_(1920)_-_Ad_4.jpg), accessed 11 December 2017.

porations, including the newspaper syndicates of New York City, dictated lumber practices of far-distant forests in Maine. Day metaphorically described the new corporate world of Maine's North Woods industry:

In the North Woods, one heard men talk of King Spruce as though this potentate were a real and vital personality. To be sure, his power was real, and power is the principal manifestation of the tyrant who is incarnate. Invisibility usually makes the tyranny more potent. King Spruce, vast association of timber interests, was visible only through the affairs of his court administered by his officers by whom power had been delegated.

Combining the economic fear of monopoly with the ecological understanding of the North Woods, Day echoed the sentiments of national Progressive reformers who feared restraint of trade. Condemning the pulp and paper industry in *King Spruce*, Day lay blame with the foreman, Pulaski D. Britt. This braggard and villain felt no compunction about the general waste involved in the old lumber activities of the nineteenth century, nor that of pulp and paper operations in the twentieth. “We left big stumps those days . . . there was a lot of it ahead of us . . . didn’t have to be economical.” Britt stated, “Get it down and yanked to the landings—that was the game!” Of present operations, Britt had no qualms about stripping the landscape bare. “We’re cutting as small as eight-inch spruce at Jerusalem. Ain’t a mouthful for a gang-saw, but they taste good to pulp-grinders.” In this era, various bills appeared before the Maine state legislature, which attempted to provide diameter limits, efforts that were defeated outright, postponed, or declared “freak and vicious legislation.”²⁰

Day’s intention with the character of Britt was to show the worst-case scenario of the forest: unmitigated clear cutting of everything down to saplings. Britt’s attitudes toward logging operations in the past reflected a grim pride in what those operations had done. While company owners bore the responsibility for clearcutting the land, the average worker in the woods continued a subsistence life. Workers were not, in Day’s estimation, entirely to blame for the overall destruction of the forests. This was a thorny argument, however, and Day generally avoided discussion of the average lumberman’s complicity in clearcutting operations.

Instead, he accented the capabilities of individuals who used their education to foster sustainable forest use. Dwight Wade, a high school principal, asked John Barrett, the lumber company owner, about using his students in the new science of forestry. Barrett laughed at the idea. The melodrama increased when Barrett learned of Wade’s interest in his daughter and worked to have Wade fired from his position. Wade had little choice but to go into the woods to work, joining up with a small lumber owner named Rod Ide. As Wade journeyed into the forest to survey the woods with his guide, Christopher Straight, he informed Wade of the manner Benjamin Britt stripped the lumber bare. Straight lamented that the woodsman who “lumbers square” suffered at the hands of big corporations: “Barrett gets his first; the agent gets his; we get what we can squeeze out of a narrow margin—and the woods get hell.”²¹

The health of the forest suffered from these practices. Well into the novel, a fire tower lookout spied a blaze raging in the forest. His description of the fire tied its destructive features with Britt’s forestry practices. The lookout thought:

It did not waste time on the green forest of beeches and maples. It was hurrying north towards its traditional prey. That prey was waiting for it, rooted on the slopes of Jerusalem and the Umcolcus, on the Attean and the Enchanted—the towering black growth of hemlock, pine, and spruce—the apple of Pulaski Britt’s commercial eye—the hope of his associates. Once there, it would spring from its crouching race on the ground. It would climb the resinous trunks and torch and flare and rage and roar in the tinder-tops—a dreaded ‘crown fire’ that only the exhaustion of fuel or the rains of God would stop.²²

Through clear cutting, Barrett and Britt changed the ecological landscape, inviting conditions for a potentially disastrous fire with over ten thousand acres of dry timber ready to burn. As environmental historian Stephen J. Pyne writes, the “historic fire season of the Northeast arrives in the spring with the passage of dry cold fronts and returns in the fall when stagnating high pressure leads to the famous Indian summer.” In Day’s wooded landscape, adversity came in the form of fire. Lumber company executives worried about North Woods settlers who lived and worked in small settlements and camps. The woods foreman, Britt, came upon the settlement of Castonia and demanded they leave before they, in turn, started fires. In Day’s novel, these itinerant settlers believed that they had a right to clear the land for farming. Britt only sneered at this conclusion.²³

One young woman of the settlement by the name of Kate Arden cursed Britt, who feared she would start fires out of anger at eviction. In an act of vengeance, Kate grabbed a torch and ran off into the forest with Britt urging his henchmen to pursue her. The heat of late summer plus the stripped state of the forest provided the conditions necessary for the resulting fire to spread. In a scene of poetic justice, during the fire, a fire warden named Linus “Ladder” Lane tied lumber owner John Barrett to a birch tree. Standing amongst the growing flames, Barrett learned that the young woman was his illegitimate daughter from an illicit relationship that Barrett had with Lane’s wife. Lane’s anger extended to Barrett’s unwillingness to acknowledge his own daughter. This information plus the roaring fire, which was eventually doused by a soaking rain, helped change Barrett’s attitudes toward the forest people. Nature, in the form of fire, possessed the power to change individual perspectives. Experiencing the power of nature first hand brought Barrett closer to the woods settlers’ point of view.²⁴

As lumber historian Stewart Holbrook wrote in *Holy Old Mackinaw*, residents of North Woods territories remained extremely conscious of forest fires as bringers of swift and terrible death. In October 1871, while the infamous Chicago Fire burned, the town of Peshtigo, Wisconsin, was “wiped out by forest fire that swept in so quickly from the surrounding

timber that eleven hundred persons were cremated.” In Maine’s *Pine Tree Magazine*, vacation writers pointed out the dangers of fire in the North Woods. These travelers too commented on an instance in which a town was swept away by fire: “All able-bodied inhabitants were even then out fighting the forest’s natural enemy in an effort to save their homes from again being wiped out.”²⁵

Stephen Pyne also notes that twentieth-century industrial forestry required fire protection to maximize sustained high yields from a given land base. The decade of the 1900s galvanized systematic fire protection from Oregon to Maine. In 1905, Maine and the logging industry cooperated in establishing lookout systems with telephones, while, in 1909, the state created a “fire control district” of unincorporated townships. Two years after the publication of *King Spruce*, the 1910 fire season that devastated western states led to an official United States Forestry Service (USFS) fire suppression policy. Reflective of this policy change, in 1911, Maine benefited from the Congressional Weeks Law, establishing a “well organized forestry system for the protection of fires.” When Day wrote of the fire-tower watch system in the state, he referenced this new system of Progressive conservation.²⁶

If fire remained a natural scourge for local forests, human activities could also inflict severe damage to the woods. As a conservationist, Day deplored “the irretrievable loss of the public domain” complaining of “the unwarranted sale of public lands, and the often illegal transfer of vast areas of the American wilderness timberland from public to private ownership.” As operations moved from producing lumber into supplying pulpwood, this concern became increasingly prominent in Day’s books. Independent lumber operators like *King Spruce*’s Rod Ide could not actively compete with industrial concerns like those led by John Barrett. Day offered no happy ending for Maine lumber operators. As historian Richard Judd argues, pulpwood brought profound changes to the woods, including more intensive utilization methods and more systematic management techniques. This shift, coupled with the movement of lumber producers further west, changed the nature of the northeastern woods.²⁷

Maine’s Water and Local Usage

Day’s more mature works addressed conservation issues in the state. With an attentive ear to the political process in Augusta, he included in his stories such important issues as water resource control, and again, his narratives were consistent with the Progressive Era leaning in his other novels. *All-Wool Morrison* (1920) illustrated the legislative battles occurring over

Maine's water power. In the novel, Stewart Morrison, mayor of Marion, was also chairman of the State Water Storage Commission. In this position he could "rap the knuckles of those who should attempt to grab and selfishly exploit 'The People's White Coal,' as he called water power."²⁸

Day's dedication of this 1920 novel to Percival Baxter illustrated his continuing attention to resource debates within Maine. In the realm of Maine politics, Percival Baxter began fighting for Maine control of Maine water power in the late 1910s and continued his efforts well after his own term as governor in the early 1920s. In three radio addresses in February 1927, Baxter commented on the water-power question then dominating the congressional sessions. Baxter took up the fight, citing the 1909 Fernald Law stating that "Maine's hydro-electricity shall not be taken out of the state" and that Maine's water power should remain for Maine people. Fearing a great lobby arrayed against the people, he reminded them of Theodore Roosevelt's concern that ordinary citizens were threatened by the power of monopolies.²⁹

In the midst of this public debate over water resources, Day, through the character of Morrison, hoped to see water power in the hands of Maine's citizens and not in the hands of outside business interests. Because of the nature of the debate, Day left the issue unresolved at the end of the novel with the governor, having heard Morrison's heartfelt plea, going to the statehouse to confront the Senate. Throughout the 1920s, water power remained a contentious issue.³⁰

As historian Christopher S. Beach writes, in New England, "federal or state governments had never been a major factor in resource development, and private control of the region's rivers and lakes was not seriously challenged." In the early twentieth century, several attempts were made to secure public ownership of water power, the first being the Fernald Law. The second occurred from 1917 to 1923, involving Percival Baxter's efforts to secure public ownership of the Dead River flowage. These efforts ultimately failed as timberland owners, such as Great Northern, consolidated their hold over the "largest privately held water power system in the Northeast."³¹

Day's association with the Progressive wise-use ideology entailed improvement of the landscape for local people as well as local control over resources. Often, that concern arose from independent lumber operators and woods workers, not necessarily from large, distant corporations. This association reflected Day's personal affinity for the rural peoples of Maine and was not necessarily the position taken by Progressive Era legislators interested in regulating big business.

Local Maine businesses, including those Day described in his fiction,

were not averse to local use of the land; the problems arose, as Day said, when outside corporate entities dominated timber, water, or some other local resource. During the Progressive Era, this tension between local and corporate use surfaced throughout the United States. As historian Lawrence M. Lipin writes, trade-union leaders in Oregon vented their ire with corporate timber companies for their fraudulent land claims, while still viewing themselves in “producerist terms” as the rightful possessors of the land, a position they justified through their labor in the forests.³²

Agrarian Sympathies: Franco-Americans and North Woods Lumber

Conservation and labor disputes declined as themes in American popular fiction by the close of the 1910s. In the 1920s, a more urban and industrially friendly public sentiment demanded new themes in American literature. Perhaps to draw on continued readership in this transition period as well as to elevate the rural communities he knew well, Day drew



Lumbermen, including some Québécois, at a woods camp near Blanchard, Maine, c. 1915. *Henry L. Withee Collection*. Collections of the Maine Historical Society, Portland, ME (MMN 17538).

increasingly on local culture in Maine. Through Franco-American habitant farmers of the St. John Valley, Day illustrated local connections to working landscapes.

The Acadians in the St. John Valley moved to that region after expulsion from Acadia, later Nova Scotia, in the 1750s and 1760s. In the 1780s, remnant Acadian populations joined Quebecois from the St. Lawrence River Valley to establish permanent settlements along the St. John. As Francis M. Carroll writes, by 1787, eighty Acadian families had received New Brunswick land grants along the Madawaska River and, by the first decade of the nineteenth century, about six hundred people, “mostly French-speaking Acadians,” lived in the Aroostook and Madawaska regions.³³

During negotiations for the Webster–Ashburton Treaty, which settled the border of Maine and New Brunswick in 1842, Daniel Webster “asserted that the establishment of American sovereignty would not be a burden to the French-speaking Acadians in the region.” Despite this statement, however, by 1917 the State House in Augusta was still debating the legality of individual lots. In *The Red Lane: A Romance of the Border* (1912), Day drew on this public debate to tell a North Woods romance about Maine’s Franco-American population, but also to show a strong commitment to local use of the landscape.³⁴

Red Lane was, in fact, not Day’s first attempt to tell a story of Acadian farmers, but it was his first fully-developed thematic use of the Acadian experience. The story *The Eagle Badge: Or, the Skokums of the Allagash* (1908) initially linked the character of Shain Searway to the Sirois family in the St. John Valley. Shain learned how the family fled Grand-Pre. Rafting their possessions up the St. John, they emigrated to mill towns in Maine and greater New England. From these factories, Shain ultimately escaped back to Madawaska country. This connection to local Maine culture foreshadowed Day’s future novels.³⁵

In *Red Lane*, Day elevated the Franco-American experience, specifically rural farming in the St. John River Valley, discussing their connections to the adjacent forest landscape. Day opened his work with the premise that smuggling—the Red Lane—was neither road nor route, but an institution that involved the movement of potatoes, oats, and other commodities “past an iron monument set in a granite block at the side of a woodland highway” that “marked where free trade ended and the tariff began.” Although some Franco-Americans such as Vetal Beaulieu took advantage of the economic hardships of his neighbors, Day made clear that the farmers of the St. John were hardworking people. In time, Beaulieu’s daughter, appropriately named Evangeline, returning home from St. Basil’s Convent School in Quebec, questioned her father’s motivations for smuggling. At the end

of the novel, she helped save the Acadians of the Madawaska region from timber interests intent on preventing their agricultural expansion.³⁶

In his fiction, Day drew a distinction between the Acadians and French-Canadians. The Acadian farmer maintained a consistent presence in the St. John River Valley over the centuries. Acadian agriculture grew out of the North Woods “by small strips, cleared principally by hand labor, five or ten acres at a time . . . thus a great north wilderness was turned to fields.” As lumber and paper interests opened up the Maine woods in the nineteenth century, St. John Valley Acadians integrated themselves into American culture and economy. The French Canadians, on the other hand, who left lower Canada before 1840, entered New England by way of Richelieu River and Lake Champlain working at haying and other farm labor in Vermont, New Hampshire, and western Massachusetts before moving on to industrial towns farther south.³⁷

By the time Day wrote his fiction, the Acadian landscape was solidly agricultural. The daughters and sons of farmers required new lands to farm. Day illustrated this situation as young farmers cleared surrounding forests. Many Madawaska families contained between three to seven children, and their farmland had to grow as the families parceled strips off of the main family farm.³⁸

In a chapter titled “The Ancient Problem of the Crowded Land,” Day illustrated the issues involved with land claims in Aroostook County. Through the character of Anaxagoras Billedeau, a roaming fiddler, Evangeline learned of the habitant farmers in the region. Billedeau explained to Evangeline how the Acadian folk differed from other French Canadians:

They do not want to run away from their homes to the big cities to stifle themselves in the mills where the cotton dust flies instead of the thistle-down and the sky is only an iron roof. Our Acadian children want to stay on the good St. John, where their fathers and their mothers live so happy. So when the boys grow up and marry, then the good father takes a slice off his farm—and the slice must be made long so that the boy may have his little house on the long pike; the slice must be made narrow, for there are other boys to grow up; there are girls to marry and bring their husbands to the home where their old folks live.

Upon hearing this story, Evangeline pointed to the far horizon, “to the hazy, blue distance where dark forest growth notched the horizon line, where the hills were thatched with woods unbroken.” Could not the Acadians move into the forested lands, clearing them as they went? Billedeau feared a border conflict as some Yankee lumber outfits sought to keep them from the forested lands. When Acadians sought to purchase lands,

Billedeau related, they found themselves continually rebuffed: “They say, ‘Boh! We do not want Canucks near our timber-lands, chopping down trees, setting fires . . . there is much money in our trees . . . we want the money.’” The settlers of the region, Billedeau concluded, must contend with insufficient land. “Our poor people are settled on fifty thousand acres of land,” he remarked, “where they have no title that the law makes good.” The land was the center of the habitant farmers’ existence, and clearing it for farming seemed self-evident to them.³⁹

Day created an ally for the Acadians in the form of Maine Senator Ambrose Clifford, representative of the broad district of Atteget. The lumber interests contended that the settlers did not properly utilize the forests and described their relationship to the land in negative terms. In the State House, politicians sneered at “Clifford’s Canucks,” but the Senator stated:

We are making American citizens up there, gentlemen. They are honest; they toil hard; they are willing, but they are poor. They do not ask for charity. They are proud because they can feed their own mouths and cover their own backs.⁴⁰

Day’s familiarity with the political workings of the State House in Augusta, as well as his interest in Acadian life as a rural, pastoral existence, drew him to the issue of land claims in Aroostook. Long-standing land claims reached back to at least the 1870s. As a reporter at the State House, he was familiar with the debates surrounding these claims. Much like Day’s fictional senator, the state’s land agent Noah Barker wrote in 1874 that he bore testimony “from personal knowledge, to the general good character of that community.” Barker argued that they were “peaceable, industrious, benevolent, and intelligent in proportion to their advantages of education.” Further elaborating, he proclaimed:

This people was a remnant of that once happy community which had been driven from their beautiful homes, and their diked farms, extending along the seaboard in Acadia, to prepare for themselves new homes in this isolated territory, then an unbroken wilderness.⁴¹

Day’s *Red Lane* is filled with the plight of the common people of Maine’s northernmost county. The novel appeared in 1912 when the issue of land claims was prominent in the public consciousness. Five years later, the state House and Senate partially resolved the debate by instructing the land agent to purchase land deeds to “sell to the settlers for cash.”⁴²

Six years before this legislative inquiry, Day illustrated the need for a land bill. The language of the report, as the language of Day’s novel also il-

lustrated, showed the Acadian habitant as a solid contributor to the agricultural sector of the county and the state. Maine could not lose hundreds of worthy farming families who developed this wilderness. In Day's fiction narrative, the state made good the disputed titles. In fiction, timber interests temporarily bowed to the concerns of cultural sustenance. As noted above, in the real world of Maine politics, it took until 1917 before legislators began to resolve this dispute. If the actual debate was less heated in the press, Day's use of the theme in a popular novel gave it greater public airing.⁴³

As Noah Barker reported in 1874, the Franco-American farmer in the St. John Valley improved the landscape through diligent labor in the forest, turning it into productive fields. Movement of agricultural products such as potatoes and grains increased due to the 1909 completion of the Bangor & Aroostook St. John River Extension. Day's work helped publicize many of the issues associated with the land-claims settlement.⁴⁴

In his fictional account, Day singled out the habitants as a focus of Progressive reform and particularly the reform ideals embodied in the Country Life movement. Understanding the benefits of agricultural reform from the perspective of white, middle-class Progressives, Day showcased these farmers as success stories in the effort to bring farming and farm people into the twentieth century. That their uplift occurred on the periphery of the nation made their diligence, hard work, and connections to the agricultural landscape of Aroostook a success worth glorifying.

Native Portrayals in the Industrial Forest

Day's attention to Maine's Acadians was one expression of his concern for local, culturally distinct people and their attempts to hold on to a rural way of life. He was less successful characterizing Maine's Native communities and their cultural connections to the landscape. Published in 1919, *Rider of the King Log: A Romance of the Northeast Border* is perhaps Day's most famous work. It reiterated the conflict between the lumber and pulp industries while relegating Native American characters to subplots within the novel. As William Houpt writes, *Rider of the King Log* was about "the transitional period in the Maine industry early in the twentieth century when the old saw-log lumbermen were being displaced by the new pulpwood outfits." Native characters remained secondary to this economic debate.⁴⁵

Day never fully illustrated the complexity of Passamaquoddy, Maliseet, and Penobscot cultures, but his focus on the lumber and paper companies illustrated the pressures placed upon traditional Native uses of the land. Many writers of this period marginalized Native characters through the

vanishing American trope, while most presented this theme in an apparently unreflective manner. In this respect, Day presented Native populations in decline, commensurate with popular public sentiment in the 1910s. This was at variance with other local writers such as Maliseet author Henry Perley of Greenville who strove to show cultural persistence in his lumber fiction.⁴⁶

By tracing Day's publications over time, it is possible to view some change in his overall portrayals of Native peoples. *Rider of the King Log* displayed an interest in Maine's Native populations, providing Native Americans with important, if limited, roles in the novel. As William Houpt notes, Day was interested in "the modern-day tragedy of the northeastern Indians, whose tribal traditions and customs are an anachronism in a white man's civilization." Yet, Houpt's cursory reading of Day does not adequately discuss his Native characters' connection to the landscape. Ivan Sherman, another Day scholar, writes that Day was unusual for his time in that he wrote extensive characterizations of Native Americans in his novels. Somewhere between these two opposing points of view, Day's true intention in representing Maine's Native peoples lay in showing a few remaining cultural connections to the landscape, born out by the public concept of a vanishing race. For instance, Day provided the 102-year-old character of Noel Nicola with just enough dialogue to explain his motivations while simultaneously suffusing that dialogue with broken syntax reminiscent of older stereotyped portrayals.⁴⁷

In the twentieth century, Maine's Native peoples remained in transition. Some populations moved between industrial areas in Maine (as well as Massachusetts and Connecticut) and traditional Maine and New Brunswick Native communities. Within the state, Native peoples gravitated to smaller towns as well. For instance, the 1910 Federal Census indicated that Maliseet families lived in Greenville, working as guides, but also as drug-store clerks and in other occupations.⁴⁸

This population in transition provided Day with a mistaken sense of a "vanishing people." Day's writings appeared at the end of what one historian has called the trend from racism to realism in American literature. The popular image of Native people hinged on a conception of their ultimate demise. Iconic images such as James E. Fraser's sculpture, entitled "The End of the Trail" (1915), exhibited at the 1915 Columbian Exhibition, further reinforced the symbolic lone Native American at the end of existence. In the East, the relative isolation of Native peoples away from major white settlements reiterated this belief.⁴⁹

In the face of this negative view of a Native future, some authors shifted from outright racist representations to more realistic depictions. Such re-

alism, as historian Robert F. Berkhofer states, meant “the treatment of Native Americans as individuals rather than as Indians, as human beings and not assemblages of tribal traits.” Day’s fictionalized representations, therefore, existed somewhere between the racism of Victorian literature and the realism of the modern.⁵⁰

In the novel, the primary conflict centers around two well-to-do white families, the Kavanaughs and the Marthorns. Exemplifying a rural–urban divide, the Kavanaughs ran lumber operations in the Maine North Woods while the Marthorns concerned themselves with paper manufacturing in New York. The family patriarchs and grown children surmounted episodes of miscommunication, perceived class differences, and the machinations of a third party, Donald Kezar, all in a manner that brought the two families together, literally, through marriage by the end of the novel.⁵¹

Despite *Rider’s* focus on the Kavanaughs and the Marthorns, Day ascribed significant roles to Lola Nicola Hebert, her great-grandfather Noel Nicola, and Paul Sabattis, who each offered Native connections to the landscape. Well into the novel, the reader learns that Noel Nicola consented to the marriage of Lola and Kezar. Kezar subsequently scorned the Nicola family by abandoning Lola, disregarding the bonds of Maliseet marriage, and his incipient racism emerged in a moment of internal dialogue. Even as he held Lola in his arms, he thought, “there were two generations of Acadians between her and Noel the Bear, chief of the Mellicites.” He added, “One easily forgot that she had Indian blood.” As Kezar’s bigotry grew, he placed the blame for his own actions upon Lola’s grandfather. In Kezar’s mind, the 102-year-old Noel Nicola claimed her as a “princess of her tribe” despite her equal Franco-American heritage:

She was the old chief’s great-grand-daughter and he always claimed that her allegiance to her tribe overshadowed her mere family relations, so jealously and bitterly did Noel view the passing of the ancient Mellicites, absorbed one by one in an alien race.

Day’s intention in portraying Lola as an Indian princess was a much-used literary device in nineteenth-century literature and indicative of his reliance on dime-novel tropes. As historian and folklorist Pauleena MacDougall writes, the use of the term, along with the term squaw, “remained popular from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries, without any apparent shift in meaning, moving into literature and later cinema.” Kezar’s rejection of Lola’s Native heritage is one of several instances in the novel where some whites adopted an unchanging racism.⁵²

And while Day clearly adhered to stereotyped portrayals of Native peo-

ples, the final pages of the novel indicate his awareness of the racism that they continued to endure. This subplot of the novel emphasized exotic imagery for urban readers even as it attempted to provide Native characters with their own motivations. For instance, Day described the elderly Noel Nicola as a keeper of the cultural connections to wilderness who had “never learned to read the printed page” and who “cared nothing for the news of the world.” At the Tribal Feast of the Maize, “as chief, he was called to the trail which led to the place of rendezvous, the Nubble of Telos, mount of hornblende from which generations of Indians had chipped the flint for their hatchets and their arrow-heads.” Having known these lands all of his life, “he did not need the age-healed scars of the trees for his guidance.”⁵³

Noel’s position as tribal elder made him responsible for the members of the Maliseet nation. He intended to take revenge against Kezar, but a series of fateful events halted Noel’s actions. Kezar lost his credibility as well as a subsequent prospect of marriage to Clare Kavanaugh. With a loss of social standing, he resolved to track and kill Clare and her new love interest, Kenneth Marthorn. Unbeknownst to Kezar, Noel Nicola discovered his murderous intentions and moved to stop him.⁵⁴

Rider of the King Log was not the first time that Holman Day used the character of Noel Nicola. In the closing pages of the novel, his depiction provides an opportunity to explore a potential shift in Day’s appraisal of Native people. The character of Noel the Bear came from a much older short story by Day entitled, “Old Noel of the Mellicites,” published in *American Magazine* in 1906. In this story, Noel felt compelled to similarly track the character who married, then spurned Noel’s granddaughter, Lola Nicola, a member of the Maliseet Nation, but also of Acadian ancestry. In *Rider* and the 1906 short story, the outcome was the same. Noel avoided direct involvement in the ultimate demise of the villain. In *Rider*, Kezar failed to see a pit trap set for a bear and fell to his death. In “Old Noel of the Mellicites,” the villain succumbed to a naturally occurring deadfall.⁵⁵

In these two versions of the story, the fate of Noel Nicola offered one prominent difference. In the 1906 story, Noel dropped his possessions and, gravely wounded, stumbled away “into the depths of the forest, with the instinct that is the instinct of the animal wounded unto death.” The ending diminished Noel’s humanity while reiterating the vanishing American myth. By the publication of *Rider* in 1919, however, Day allowed for a more complex ending that hinted at reconciliation between whites and Native peoples. Where Noel Nicola represented a Native American elder in *Rider*, the reader is introduced to another prominent Native character, Paul Sabattis, who represented the younger generation. During a trek in the Al-

lagash region, Noel and Paul encountered Clare Kavanaugh and Kenneth Marthorn. Paul related the news of Lola and Paul's impending marriage. In turn, Clare informed the two men that she and Kenneth also set a marriage date. In a gesture of acceptance, Clare invited Noel, Paul, and Lola to their wedding, stating "we shall welcome friends." Day emphasized this gesture further by describing Clare's invitations as sincere and without "condescending patronage."⁵⁶

Whereas romantic subplots are resolved in the novel, other subplots involving Native families trapped by an encroaching lumber industry, the racist bent of white society, and the failure of local government to honor hunting and fishing treaties all proved to be intractable issues. Paul Sabattis, for instance, used his university education to champion the rights of Maine's Native peoples. Paul returned from Boston with treaties he said showed the ancient Maliseet rights to forest use. He went to the timber interests who were stripping the landscape and held the treaties that proved Algonquians had the right to hunt and fish and take basket wood and bark forever. In oratorical fashion, Paul discussed his trip into the woods in search for facts to help his people:

Our fishing and hunting privileges, our treaty rights to go upon lands for birch bark and basket stuff, have been disputed, have been taken away from us. Game wardens and timber bosses of the big syndicates who never heard of the treaties are browbeating our people. I am going into the woods. I am going for facts. I have been down-country for some weeks, talking with big lawyers. I have money now, he added, bitterly. I'll spend it doing some good with it, if I can.

Paul utilized his law training to help the tribe in its dispute with the lumber companies and the state. In an extended sequence, Paul and Lola found themselves facing game wardens who accused them of criminal activity, including hunting out of season, simply because they were Native American. Paul and Lola fled these officials while Paul subsequently attempted to make the contents of the treaties known to the public. In reality, there was no legislative landmark that made this law binding. Maine historian John F. Sprague quoted *Rider of the King Log*, noting that Sabattis's treaties of land claims for the Maliseet relied, instead, on a small series of legal briefs applying to other Maine tribal groups including the Passamaquoddy Nation. Sprague quoted an 1891 court case, *State v. Peter Newell*, where the defendant had been indicted for killing two deer on January 14, 1891, during the period of "close time." Newell claimed that as a member of the Passamaquoddy tribe, he was not subject to this law or any of its penalties,

“his rights to free hunting and fishing having been reserved to him in treaties made between the United States and the tribe of which he was a member.”⁵⁷

It was up to the court to determine if he had the right to hunt and fish outside established state laws. It was eventually determined that the Passamaquoddy people represented a tribe that “for many years have been without a tribal organization in any political sense” and that they were “as completely subject to the states as any other inhabitants can be.” Despite Paul’s possession of treaties and his intention “to make enough noise about it in the world so that the white man will hear and be ashamed,” Day left the issue of land usage claims open, instead resolving the story in a romantic fashion with Paul and Lola Hebert becoming a couple. This unsatisfactory conclusion mirrored popular perceptions of Native peoples in the United States by the 1920s. If Day provided a measure of reconciliation between the white and Native characters in the novel, he still missed an opportunity to address the wider social, political, and economic issues facing Maine’s Native populations.⁵⁸

The Northern Forest and New Reader Expectations

Despite his own literary limitations, Day’s northern landscape was a rich tapestry of ethnic and cultural groups. Day wrote of the North Woods from the perspective of local working people. The ordinary woods worker was ennobled, in Day’s estimation, by confronting greedy and recalcitrant lumber barons. His themes regularly delved into conflicts between these wealthy lumber barons and woods workers. During the Progressive Era, Day made the case that local people, not outsiders, should control the North Woods of Maine. His fiction accentuated these local people and a working relationship to the forest that at least tangentially alluded to a wise-use ideology.

Day’s premise that local, traditional knowledge was critical to a greater understanding of the uses and limits of the forest undergirded his affection for the peoples he wrote about. At news of his death in 1935, the editors of the *Lewiston Evening Journal* remembered that he never made a good editor because he preferred to be out in the field taking in the essence of Yankee character, collecting the stories, anecdotes, and character descriptions he drew on for his novels. Day created full representations of Franco-American characters and, to some extent, Maine’s Native peoples. He strove to provide each group with a sense of connection to the landscape, but only partially succeeded in a literary sense.⁵⁹

The Rider of the King Log

From the Famous Novel
By Holman Day

A Picture that will make more friends for your house than any you have ever played. It is different.

Different in its originality and vigor; different because it was made in the big Northwoods in settings you have never seen before; different in its characters which step out of the printed page and are real human men and women; different because it creates old "X.K.," master of logs and men, hard fisted, soft hearted, who will live as a screen classic as long as pictures last.

Do you want to see your audiences thrill first with laughter and then with tears? Play it!

Do you want to have dozens come to you and thank you for the enjoyment you have given them? Play it!

Do you want to double your ordinary business? Play it!

For your own profit and your audience's pleasure, play it. —FIRST!

Associated Exhibitors Inc.
35 West 43rd St. New York
Pathe Distributors



Pathe Distributors

Advertisement for 1921 film adaptation of *Rider of the King Log*, 22 May 1921. *The Film Daily*. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Rider_of_the_King_Log_\(1921\)_-_Ad_1.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Rider_of_the_King_Log_(1921)_-_Ad_1.jpg), accessed 11 December 2017.

In the late 1910s, Day's investment in a motion-picture company in Augusta initially paid off with successful film versions of his fiction. A nation-wide depression in 1921, however, hurt attendance at his most ambitious movie production, *Rider*. Day's company folded in 1922, and he returned to Boston to write for magazines like *Colliers*. Hollywood turned out a handful of North Woods pictures after 1920, but most no longer hinged on the forest as a place of labor. Instead, these sporadic films presented the woods as a backdrop for historical dramas of the Old Northwest or for storylines involving the Canadian Mounted Police.⁶⁰

By the mid-1920s, Day lived in San Francisco and the Monterey Peninsula broadcasting his interpretation of a Yankee character called the "Old Salt" for the *Happy Time Hour* on NBC radio. The West Coast public loved his portrayals of a "state o' Maine deep sea sailor man," who "chats about New Englanders, philosophizes a bit, and dispenses a homely humor that has the whole coast laughing." As these radio proclamations suggest, Day kept his audience attentive with stories of rural people.⁶¹

Day continued to write North Woods melodramas well into the 1920s. However, the temper of the nation had changed. In that decade, Day confronted a new generation more interested in urban culture. If the North Woods melodrama still appeared in fiction, it remained relegated to the pages of pulp magazines such as *Argosy*. Stories by writers such as Robert E. Pinkerton continued the basic plot devices that Day had inherited from the dime novels of the nineteenth century. Also, the Progressive Era conservation agenda Day incorporated into his fiction declined in the face of a more pro-industry climate. In this new temper, Day's works seemed anachronistic and out of place. His attention to local, traditional culture failed to revive his popularity even as interest in regionalism took hold in American society in the 1930s. His melodramatic plots and fiction style seemed removed from the realism enjoyed by the reading public in that decade.⁶²

By pitting a young, idealistic woods worker, often of a small, independent lumber company, against a major lumber corporation, and throwing local inhabitants into the mix, Day elevated the connection between rural culture and the woods around it. He was fascinated with local culture, from Franco-American habitants to Maine's Native peoples, and their connections to the northern forests. The local control of resources became the dominant issue in Day's fiction, as part of an ideology that typified his adherence to a wise-use landscape perspective. Day's fiction may have been ephemeral, but while it lasted it reflected, in a romanticized way, the political and social concerns of the state that hosted his tales of the North Woods.

NOTES

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38. *Thirteenth Census of the United States: 1910 Population, Madawaska, Maine* (Washington, DC: Department of Commerce and Labor—Bureau of the Census, 1910).
39. Day, *Red Lane*, 68–69 (first and second quotation), 70, (third quotation), 71 (fourth quotation).
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41. Noah Barker, *Report of the Commissioner on Claims of Settlers on Proprietor's Lands in the County of Aroostook* (Augusta, ME: Sprague, Owen, and Nash, 1874), 5 (first, second, and third quotation).
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43. Day, *Red Lane*, 362; *House Documents, 1917*.
44. Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, "St. John Valley Heritage Trail, Maine," accessed 21 November 2017, <https://www.trailink.com/trail-history/saint-john-valley-heritage-trail/>.
45. Houpt, "Long Logging," 295.
46. For further information on Henry Perley's writings, please see Dale Potts, "Henry Red Eagle and the Native American Presence in the New England Woods," in Blake Harrison and Richard W. Judd, eds., *A Landscape History of New England*, (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2011), 91–107 and Potts, "Henry Red Eagle, Popular Literature and the Native American Connection to the Maine Woods," *Maine History* 43, no. 2 (August 2007): 187–217.
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61. Willard DeLue, "Holman Day's Yankee Humor," *Boston Daily Globe*, August 30, 1931 (first and second quotations).
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